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NSC BRIEFING

8 June 1954

IRAQI ELECTIONS

I. Prospects

A. Parliamentary elections being held today (9 June) will

probably be won by pro-Western conservatives.

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1. [REDACTED] widespread government intervention in elections has begun; aimed at Communist-dominated National Front and also at assuring parliamentary control for Constitutional Union party of Nuri Said.
2. Other leading conservative party--led by Saleh Jabr--split three ways; many, including Jabr--erstwhile foe of Nuri--are for the present supporting Nuri.
3. No indication who will be prime minister. Nuri Said, who has held that office 11 times always a good possibility. Ex-prime minister Jamali is politically ambitious.

B. Communist-directed National Front--consisting of illegal Communist Party, leftist National Democratic Party, rightist Independence Party, and independents--expected win from 8

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to 20 seats out of 135. Lower figure seems more likely

now that government has begun intervention. Late reports indicate arrest of seven Front candidates and tight control on public meetings.

C. Communists threaten armed demonstrations; are prepared for strong police action; several killed, wounded and arrested

in disturbances so far. However, early June reports 25X1A6a
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state Iraqi army alerted and will take over police posts from 8-10 June and will return fire if crowd begins shooting. Government considered able to control situation.

II. Significance of elections

A. Continuation of present Iraqi foreign policy:

1. Implementation of Iraqi-American arms aid agreement.
2. Support for eventual adherence to Turkish-Pakistani pact.

B. Increased importance of Communist Party:

1. Should about 10 seats be won by Communist-controlled candidates--as is likely--they will be in a position to cause government considerable trouble through ability to

exploit anti-Westernism in parliament.

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2. Only Communists have waged vigorous election campaign; accumulated non-Communist candidates; attracted independent support; captured non-Communist meetings, spread much propaganda against arms aid and pact. All this activity even though CP outlawed and continuously subject police repression.

C. Mounting tension in Iraq:

1. Communist activity, apathy of pro-Western politicians and absence of genuine liberal, reform party in Iraq leaves the Communists only voice of deep political and social discontent.
2. Elections doing nothing to eliminate that discontent, and extremism can be expected to grow.

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BACKGROUND DATA

ELECTION STATISTICS

Out of 466 original candidates 144 have withdrawn as of 6 June. Of the 322 remaining, 32 candidates unopposed, including 12 members of Nuri's conservative Constitutional Union Party. Withdrawal was largely motivated by desire to save \$250 deposit required of each candidate. This deposit forfeited by candidates who failed to receive at least 10 percent of vote cast in his election district.